

**Wombat Forestcare Inc**  
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## **Media Release**

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### **Mining Licence approved for Wombat Forest**

Wombat Forestcare has been informed that a 53.8 hectare gold mining licence has been approved for the Wombat State Forest at Shepherd's Flat despite many objections lodged by the local community.

The mining licence is for the recovery of gold and the mining application included 'bulk sampling' in the proposed program of works. The licence area covers a number of waterways, which form part of the headwaters of Jim Crow Creek in the Loddon River Catchment. It would be of great environmental concern if the intention were to take 'bulk samples' from or near any of these waterways due to the impacts on the waterways and the potential to disturb historic mining products such as mercury.

It appears that as Wombat Forestcare's objections related to potential impacts on the environment, they do not warrant the refusal of the licence. The letter from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources states that the " environmental impacts of the proposed work will be assessed prior to the work plan being approved."

As the department that is in charge of promoting mining (Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources) manages the work plan approval process, Wombat Forestcare considers that protections for the environment are not always rigorous.

An example of this occurred when a work plan was approved for a 'bulk sample' of 5,000 tonnes from the headwaters of the heritage-listed Lerderderg River without the involvement of the water authority. Melbourne Water was made aware of the situation and the works have not proceeded.

Wombat Forestcare is writing to the Minister for Planning, Hon Richard Wynne, seeking an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) for the site. This process is much more thorough than the requirement for the licensee to obtain a planning permit and allows for community involvement at certain stages.

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